

Guidelines for Choosing Godparents

Church of Saint Joseph
St. Joseph, MN

Who do you choose as a Godparent?

Godparents should not be chosen just out of family expectations or pressures. Since the role of the godparents is to be a presence, specifically a spiritual presence, in a child's life, then some considerations must be made.

- Is the person likely to remain in contact with you and/or your child, to the best of your knowledge?
- Is the person living a life you can respect?
- Will this person be a good example to your child?
- Could you trust this person to raise your child in faith?
- Does this person give witness to God in their everyday life?

These are certainly questions that should be asked, and answered. However, there are other rules that must be followed as well. The Church itself has guidelines (called Canons) for Godparents. These are not a judgment on other people, but rather a way to ensure that a child baptized into the Catholic Church has a Godparent who can relate to their faith and help to pass it on.

What are the requirements of Canon Law?

- One Godparent, male or female, is sufficient; but there may be two, a male and female.
- The Godparent cannot be the child's mother or father.
- The Godparent must be a Catholic who has received all three Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation).
- The Godparent must be at least 16 years of age, and must moreover live a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken.
- The Godparent must be in good standing with the Catholic Church.

Parish Policy

A maximum of two Godparents will be recorded in the permanent parish registry and noted on the Baptism Certificate.

Should special family circumstances warrant more than two Godparents, it is permissible to name additional Christian witnesses. Only the two Godparents will accompany the parents and child to the baptismal font. The additional witnesses will remain in the reserved pew(s).